

New York State Commission on Adult Homes

Preliminary Proposal

There are complex and cross systems issues confronting New York State Government as work progresses to appropriately respond to the needs of all current residents in adult homes and to plan well for them in the future. New York State needs to have a consolidated locus of responsibility, directly accountable to the Governor's office, and including staff from a number of disciplines and state agencies including DOH, OMH, CQC, DHRC, OTDA, SOFA, SED, OMR-DD, OASAS, the AG and others. It would be somewhat similar to the Council for Children and Families.

New York State should create in statute a Commission on Adult Homes, to be chaired by the Governor's Secretary. The Director of the Council should have the rank and salary of a top-ranking Commissioner. The Council should have sufficient staff to manage a variety of responsibilities delineated below. The budget should cover staff, other necessary day-to-day activities including travel and contract money for independent evaluations and other consultation. The Council should make annual progress reports to the Legislature and to the public.

This office does not need to become a new department nor should all staff across state agencies working on this important agenda be housed there. Instead it should be a "staff function" with authority, responsibility and oversight over all the relevant state agencies. It would perform such functions as:

- Design the conversion/downsizing planning process including a conversion plan and timetable with each ACF above 120 beds.
- Direct capital planning, especially in the early years as delineated in final report document.

- Identify necessary capital and operating resources for facilities in the community and congregate care facilities, developing a full budget proposal to be included in the Executive Budget.
- Develop and monitor progress of a well-developed, approved and vetted work plan, making mid-course corrections, based on clinical assessments, as needed.
- Analyze present housing options and plan and begin and oversee development of new housing in the various categories described in the recommendations.
- Identify areas of needed change in law and regulation and shepherd needed changes through the process.
- Provide continuing vigilance to assure a recover and rehabilitation focus for housing and services.
- Allocate and monitor Quality Incentive Payments (QUIP).

New York State has had experience with such an approach during the many years of deinstitutionalization under the aegis of OMH and the close of Willowbrook under the leadership of OMRDD. New York's response to the Willowbrook decree is an especially good template not only illustrating an approach to make massive systemic change but as an example of when shared commitment and action can lead to a profound change in the lives of New York State citizens.